

GENERAL SAFETY - CARELESSNESS

Have you ever done anything stupid, something that you know puts you at increased risk of injury? When you realize how stupid you were, whether you got hurt or not, do you ask yourself, "Why did I ever do that?" For your own future preservation, this should be a very important question for you to answer yourself. Consider the fact that approximately 20% of injuries are due to unsafe conditions and 80% are caused by unsafe acts. If you realize that most unsafe conditions are brought about by human failure, then virtually all accidents are brought about by unsafe acts. Why did you do something in an unsafe manner? To answer this question, you will need to put personal defenses aside and know that blame may lie within yourself. Also realize that there may be more than one reason for your actions and others may be involved.

If you knew the proper, safe way to do the job, then you cannot claim ignorance. What is left, whether you like it or not, is carelessness. So what can cause you to temporarily disregard your own safety?

External Pressure -- "Let's get this job done!" Usually this pressure comes from your direct supervisor. Disregarding safe practices is not going to save enough time to make a significant difference. However, any accident or injury is guaranteed to have an effect. As a matter of fact, when the pressure is applied, it is worthwhile to pay more attention to safety because we know, from experience, such situations frequently lead to more accidents.

Bad Habits -- You fail to follow the established procedure and you don't get hurt (or you were not caught) this time. Psychologically, this is a reward and so you do it again and again and again. But it is also Russian roulette. How many times can you pull the trigger before a round is in the chamber? You know, sooner or later, something is going to happen. There is only one way to stop it - stop pulling the trigger. Do yourself a favor and follow the established procedures.

Internal Pressure -- There is just so much to do and not enough time!" Are you self-motivated and self-directed? Most employers love this type of individual, but your single-minded determination to get the job done may cause you to lose sight of the dangers around you. Think of it this way, you will not finish the job if you get hurt. You may finish the job if you don't get hurt. Therefore, first, prevent injury. Second, work to complete the job. Make sense?

Attitude -- "This safety stuff doesn't apply to me!" So what makes you so special? A study of mine accidents involving foremen showed that the foremen were injured when they personally failed to apply the safety standards they were to enforce. Did the fact that they were foremen protect them from injury? No. Humans are humans. Rich or poor. Men or women. Weak or strong. There is nothing in your status that will protect you from injury except following the safe procedure.

Remember, safety is no more than doing the job the right way, every day.